



LENIN-BROVEVICH
**THE FIRST DAYS
OF THE
OCTOBER**

В. Бонч-Бруевич

В ПЕРВЫЕ ДНИ ОКТЯБРЯ

На фотодруке выдан

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VLADIMIR DMITRIYEVICH
BONCH-BRUYEVICH
(1875-1955)
A SOVIET STATESMAN
AND PARTY LEADER,
LENIN'S FRIEND
AND ASSOCIATE

V. BONCH-BRUYEVICH
THE FIRST
DAYS
OF THE
OCTOBER



TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN
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During the first days of the October Revolution Petrograd was in a state of expectation. Everyone seemed to be waiting. The Smolny was crowded, for this was the main headquarters of the Bolsheviks. It was where the Revolutionary Military Committee sat. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was here, too. He greeted the people who had come to consult him, asked them about the events of the day and, mostly, about what was happening at the Winter Palace not far away and at the approaches to the Palace.

The news that Vladimir Ilyich was at the Smolny soon spread among the Bolsheviks. Many wanted to see him and so came to the Smolny. People who had no direct business there kept looking in as well. Newspapermen, and especially foreign correspondents, all wanted to gain entrance to his office.

They had probably noticed that the stream of people was focused on this room and that the active centre of the uprising was located here.

A reliable guard was needed. There were over five hundred armed workers in one of the rooms. These were Red Guards.

It was decided that about seventy-five of the men would be assigned to guard the Smolny.

A young, handsome, curly-haired worker of









about thirty gave the command for the men to line up.

In an instant they all stood at attention. It became very still. Two guards stood by the door. The commander then said that seventy-five volunteers were needed and that the risk would be great. They might even face death.

At this the entire detachment took a step forward and then came to attention again. The commander chose seventy-five men and appointed a commander and two deputies.

"In case of anything..." he said sternly and fell silent.

The first thing they did was to issue passes. Vladimir Ilyich received Pass No. 1.

"What is this? A pass? What for?" he said.

"You need it. Just in case. We've put up a guard for the Smolny. Here, come and look."

Vladimir Ilyich went to the door and looked out. He saw the unit lined up and standing at attention.

"What fine young men! It's a pleasure to look at them!" he said.

The guards stood outside the entrance and at the door inside the room.

The commander immediately established contact with the central detachment. People kept pouring into the Smolny.

* * *

Vladimir Ilyich was most concerned by the fact that the siege of the Winter Palace, where the Cadets who were guarding the Provisional Government had dug in, was dragging on.

The Pavlovsky Regiment had gone over to the side of the revolutionary forces. It was ordered to take up positions along the streets leading to the Winter Palace.

The regiment surrounded the Palace.

Reinforcements of revolutionary sailors arrived and ran in spurts across the Palace Square, occupying the approaches to the Winter Palace. The storm of the Winter Palace had begun. The battle raged for several hours.

Drawing the soldiers of the Pavlovsk Regiment and the Red Guards after them, the sailors attacked the huge Palace doors and forced them open, rushing into the ground floor premises.

The cruiser *Aurora* was moored on the Neva River. Its guns had been trained on the Palace. The gunners of Petropavlovsk Fortress opposite had received a similar order.

The guns of the *Aurora* and of Petropavlovsk Fortress heralded the start of the storm of the Winter









Palace. Red Guards, sailors and soldiers took over the main areas of the Palace: the stairways, entrances and exits. During the night of October 25th revolutionary Bolshevik forces occupied the Winter Palace. The Provisional Government was arrested and sent under guard to Petro-pavlovsk Fortress.

Kerensky, the head of the Provisional Government, was disguised as a woman and sneaked out through a secret passage, escaping in an automobile provided by the American Embassy.

* * *

A soldier from an armoured car, dressed in a black leather jacket and breeches, hurried down the corridor. He had a dispatch case over his shoulder and steadied it with his left hand.

"Where's the Revolutionary Military Committee Headquarters?" he said, addressing two Red Guards who stood watch outside the door.

"Who do you want to see?"

"Lenin! I've a dispatch for him!"

One of the guards turned to the other and said, "It's a messenger. And he does have a pass. He's come to headquarters to see Lenin. We'll have to call the corporal of the guard."





The corporal of the guard came out and asked where the messenger was from.

"From Commander-in-Chief Podvoisky."

"Let's go."

"I've brought a dispatch. I'm to hand it over to Lenin," the soldier said as he entered the adjoining room.

Vladimir Ilyich came over to him. "Yes. What is it, comrade?"

"Are you Lenin?" The soldier stared at Vladimir Ilyich with undisguised interest. His eyes lit up. He unbuckled his case quickly, took out a sheet of paper and handed it to Vladimir Ilyich carefully. Then he saluted and said:

"It's a dispatch!"

"Thank you, comrade," Vladimir Ilyich offered him his hand.

The soldier shook Lenin's hand awkwardly, holding it between both of his own hands. He smiled, saluted again, turned sharply on his heel and marched off. While walking smartly he slipped a sheet of paper with Lenin's signature of receipt on it into his case.

Vladimir Ilyich read the dispatch aloud rapidly: "The Winter Palace has been taken. The Provisional Government has been arrested. Kerensky has escaped!"

No sooner had he finished reading than loud cheering broke out. It was caught up by the Red Guards in the adjoining room.

Cheering soon filled all the rooms and corridors.

At about 4 a.m. we finally began to leave the Smolny. We were all tired, but very excited. I invited Vladimir Ilyich to sleep over at my house. To this end, I phoned the detachment of armed workers of Rozhdestvensky District and told them to scout the streets and see that all was well.

We left the Smolny. The city was plunged in darkness. We got into an automobile and headed for my house.

Vladimir Ilyich seemed very tired and dozed in the car. We had a pot-luck supper. I tried to make Vladimir Ilyich as comfortable as possible. I had a hard time coaxing him to take my bed in my small study. He finally agreed, and we parted for the night.

I lay down on the couch in the next room and decided to stay awake until I was convinced that Vladimir Ilyich was asleep.

To make doubly sure that everything was safe I locked, bolted and chained the front door and cocked my revolvers, because I wanted to be prepared if anyone tried to break in and arrest or kill Vladimir Ilyich. We might expect anything.

Just in case, I took a slip of paper and wrote down all the telephone numbers I knew of our various comrades, the Smolny, the district Workers' Committees and the trade unions. "That's so I won't forget them in an emergency," I said to myself.

Vladimir Ilyich turned off his light. I listened closely, but could not hear a sound coming from his room. Just as I finally dozed off, I glimpsed a flash of light under his door.

I came awake instantly and heard him rise softly, open the door to my room cautiously and look in to make sure that I was asleep. He then tiptoed over to the desk in the study, sat down, opened the lid of the inkwell, spread some papers out and began to work. I could see all this through the crack he had left in the door.

Vladimir Ilyich was writing. Then he struck something out, read over what he had written, made notes, wrote again and, finally, seemed to be making a clean copy of what he had written.

Dawn was breaking. The late Petrograd autumn morning was turning gray when Vladimir Ilyich finally switched off the light, went to bed and fell asleep. I, too, fell asleep.

That morning I asked my family to be very quiet, for I told them Vladimir Ilyich had been up working all night and was certainly exhausted.



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Временное
которое борол
демократически;
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производством
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КЪ ГРАЖДАНАМЪ РОССИИ

Временное правительство изложено. Дѣло, за
которое боролся народъ: немедленное предложение
демократическаго мира, отмена помѣщичьей соб
ственности на землю, рабочій контроль надъ
производствомъ, создание Совѣтскаго правитель
ства—это дѣло обезлечено.

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Хлѣб—

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Да здравствуетъ
революция рабочихъ, солдатъ и крестьянъ!
Хлѣб—голоднымъ!
Землю—крестьянамъ!
Заводы—рабочимъ!
Миръ—народамъ!

Временный Революционный Комитетъ
при Петроградскомъ Совѣтѣ
Депутатовъ
17-го января 1917 г. 10 ч. утра.



НИ!

АМЪ РОССИИ!

РАЖДАНАМЪ РОССИИ!

...ное правительство изложено. Дело, за
боролся народ: немедленное предложение
этического мира, отмена помещичьей соб-
ственности на землю, рабочий контроль надъ
производствомъ, создание Советскаго правитель-
ства — это дело обезлечено.

Да здравствуютъ
рабочихъ, солдатъ и крестьянъ!
Хлебъ — голоднымъ!
Землю — крестьянамъ!

Заводы — рабочимъ!
Миръ — народамъ!

Военно-Революционный Комитетъ
при Петроградскомъ Совете
Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ
26 октября 1917 г. 10 ч. утра.

Suddenly the door opened and he emerged, fully dressed, looking fresh and vigorous, and smiling happily.

"Greetings on the first day of the Socialist Revolution!" he said.

There was not a trace of fatigue on his face. One might have thought he had slept soundly all through the night, when actually he had not had more than two or three hours' sleep after a hard, twenty-hour day.

Some comrades arrived. When Nadezhda Konstantinovna, who had also spent the night at my house, joined us and we all sat down to breakfast, Vladimir Ilyich took some pages from his pocket and read us the famous Decree on Land which he had been composing during these decisive days. We soon set out on foot for the Smolny and then took a streetcar. Vladimir Ilyich beamed to see the calm orderliness in the streets.

That evening, at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, after the Decree on Peace had been adopted, Vladimir Ilyich read out the Decree on Land, enunciating each word. The Congress adopted it joyously, unanimously.

Dear children!

This book was written by a direct participant in the events of 1917, the first commandant of the Headquarters of the October Revolution in Smolny, V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich. The book is illustrated by documentary photographs that are carefully preserved at the Revolution Museum in Moscow. Sixty years have passed since the October Revolution was carried through. In these years the economically underdeveloped, backward Russia has made a dizzy leap forward. The children in this photograph know their country as one of the most advanced in the world, they live at a time of huge construction projects and the conquest of space. But they listen with bated breath to the old Communist Vassili Petrovich Vinogradov, a participant in the October Revolution, who is telling them about those historic days.





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